From: Joshua Powell <Josh@thepowellhousepress.com>

To: supervisor@chathamnewyork.us

Date: February 12, 2026, 2:04 PM

Subject: Press Inquiry: Questions Regarding Dr. Williams, 509 Bashford Road and Related Matters

Dear Supervisor Collins:

My name is Joshua Powell. I am a journalist currently reporting on matters related to Dr. Edwin Williams' development project at 508 Bashford Road in Chatham and the various regulatory and land use proceedings surrounding the property. I am writing to give you an opportunity to respond to several questions before my next article on Wednesday February 18th, 2026.

On Your Absence from the County Board of Supervisors Meeting

1. You were absent from last night's Columbia County Board of Supervisors meeting. Can you explain why you were not in attendance?

2. Were you aware that matters related to the agricultural district — including the potential addition of Fox Hill — were on the agenda? Did your absence have any connection to those proceedings?

On Your Business Relationship with Dr. Williams

3. Can you confirm that you currently lease land from Dr. Edwin Williams? What are the terms and duration of that lease?

4. When did this leasing arrangement begin — before or after Dr. Williams first applied for zoning approvals related to his property on 509 Bashford Road.

5. Have you ever formally disclosed this financial relationship with Dr. Williams to the Chatham Town Board, the Planning Board, or the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, when and in what form?

6. Did you recuse yourself from any Town Board votes, discussions, or executive sessions involving Fox Hill Vineyard, Dr. Williams' applications, or the agricultural district inclusion? If not, why not?

7. Do you believe a reasonable person could view your financial relationship with Dr. Williams as a conflict of interest under New York General Municipal Law Article 18?

On the Agricultural District Application

8. What role, if any, did you play in advancing the resolution before the Columbia County Board of Supervisors to add 509 Bashford Road to an agricultural district?

9. Are you aware that Fox Hill's wine production output appears minimal relative to the size and assessed value of the estate? Does that concern you as a matter of legitimate agricultural use?

10. Did you advocate — formally or informally — on Dr. Williams' behalf with any county officials, board members, or the Columbia County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board regarding the agricultural district inclusion?

On Environmental Review (SEQRA)

11. The county issued a negative declaration under SEQRA for the agricultural district addition, effectively bypassing full environmental review. Did you support that determination? On what basis?

12. Fox Hill sits in a residential area with neighbors who have raised concerns about traffic, noise, commercial activity, and environmental impacts. Why shouldn't a full environmental impact statement be required?

13. Are you aware of any wetlands, stormwater concerns, or habitat issues on or adjacent to the Fox Hill property that might warrant closer environmental scrutiny?

14. Are you familiar with the history of the Dewey Loeffel Landfill Superfund site near Nassau Lake — where inadequate oversight of industrial activity led to PCB contamination that now flows through the Valatie Kill into Kinderhook Lake, with fish consumption advisories still in effect decades later? As Town Supervisor, does that example give you any pause about bypassing full environmental review for land use changes in your own jurisdiction?

On the Broader Pattern

15. Critics say that Dr. Williams' project has evolved from a wedding venue proposal to a vineyard and tasting room — essentially seeking commercial use of residential land through a series of rebranded applications. Do you share that concern?

16. As Town Supervisor, do you believe your constituents in the neighborhoods surrounding 509 Bashford Road have been adequately heard in this process?

17. Have you ever received any gifts, hospitality, campaign contributions, or other things of value from Dr. Williams, his family, or any entity associated with Fox Hill Estate?

18. If it were established that your leasing arrangement constitutes a conflict of interest, would you be willing to recuse yourself from all future matters involving Dr. Williams and his vineyard?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Joshua Powell (518) 567-8300